



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0439NC-1 for Moore County School

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision and mission are clear and goals are achievable...The vision for this grant is for all students in the district to be successful academically and otherwise. The mission for this grant is to provide the tools and training necessary to make the vision a reality)- focus is on teacher effectiveness on student learning; reading skills, and personalized learning. The approach to attain goals includes the use of reflective teaching and learning; use of personal computing devices both at home and school for all students; and reading and literacy support-convincing approach. Evidence to support the four core educational assurances is insufficient. Appropriate use of the currently in place infrastructure: NC Ed Cloud technology- provided by state's Race to the Top Award The logic model provides sound evidence that the goals are attainable and will accelerate student achievement, deepen student learning. Convincing evidence to support the claim that equity will be increase is unclear/inadequate. 		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools were selected using the MCS "pyramid of support for school improvement and management" (Tier System)- (tier 4 schools are at the top and include the lowest performing schools; tier 3 require strategic intervention and assistance and did not meet federal or state benchmarks for at least two years; tier 2 requires targeted assistance and did not meet federal or state benchmarks for one year; and tier 1 schools receive ongoing support but do not require targeted assistance as they are meeting benchmarks) Inadequate details provided about Tier 4 status. Supporting details are necessary for a complete picture of the this pyramid hierarchy. A2 chart: applicant's approach to implementation illustrates the participating schools -grade level and other demographic information; this chart provides support to the schools descriptions and LEA status. Provided names of the participating schools which fell in either tier 4,3, or 2- Aberdeen Primary; Aberdeen Elem, Southern Pines Primary, Southern Pines Elem, New Century Middle, Southern Middle and Pinckney Academy; Pinecrest HS; North Moore HS and Union Pines HS Approximately 4000 students; 10 participating schools; 511 educators; provided data to support which students are high needs and of low income families. Provided data giving the total number of participating students (3919) with 53% from low income families; the number of schools (10) and number of educators (511); of the 3919 students 44.9% are high needs students. 		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The logic model provides clear priorities,and outcomes for the project: the model illustrates how all outcomes (short, medium, and long term) align with the priorities and activities (for example, bring literacy support to low income neighborhoods- outcomes include increase family engagement; student reading proficiency will increase; and participating student will experience academic success and proficiency). The process of scaling up appears to be logical and attainable; supported by the district wide 1:1 technology. initiative; 8th grade reading and math support [program will target those who need more support and assigned to a career coach who is a teacher of that specific discipline-coach will work with student on a plan that will enhance the weaknesses]]; 		

assessment database for all high schoolers which is comprised of practice tests and vocabulary drills in the 4 subject areas.

- Inadequate details to support the district wide 1-1 technology initiative claim.
- Did not see where the Elem school students were mentioned in how the proposal would scaled up and translate into reform to support change beyond the participating schools- middle and high were mentioned.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)

10

4

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- Provided sufficient data to support the likelihood of improved student learning and performance.
- Table 4A included performance on summative assessments being used- reading grade 3; methodology for determining status- percent proficient; and methodology for determining growth-achievement levelGoal areas such as reading grade 3 and 7, proficiency status; math grade 3, 7 proficiency status; reading, grade 4 proficiency status were provided along with the various subgroups (white, black, Asian, economically disadvantaged, limited English proficiency, students with disabilities) and baseline stats.
- Table 4b was entitled decreasing achievement gaps; 4c was titled graduation rates; and 4d college enrollment - each table contain convincing and appropriate numerical evidence that illustrated the goal areas, subgroups, baseline stats and goal.
- Baseline data was not available by subgroups for the college enrollment rate- justification should be provided to make clear how the goal percentages were developed.
- Perhaps more descriptive text to support the tables to further support how the vision is likely to result in improved learning and performance.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	7
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant noted that in the past year, 14 of 20 schools have improved their performance composite. • Provided raw data for the drop out rates (decreased 2.89 to 1.61); AP exams (1216 increased to 1584); graduation rates (73.1 increased to 85.1 within last 4 years); composite performance for grades 3-8 in reading and math (69.3% increased to 80.8% within last 5 years) ;composite performance for 10th grade reading and math over last four years (71.4% to 88.6%) • Data was provided for the SAT scores over the last years which does not show a clear record of success; data show scores improve to decline with the last 2 years (1039 in 08 to increase to 1045 in 09 to then drop to 1048 and 1025 during 2010 and 2011 respectively; Justification is not provided -although scores are higher than the states' and nation's average • Did not provide details on when or how long the Sandhills Leadership Academy and Investing in Innovation grants were in place or how they specifically and directly aid to the increasing or success found in the drop out and graduation rates or SAT scores - this would have helped to justify the claim that this action adds to the success in advancing student learning and achievement within the last 4 years • As it relates to low performing schools- the Mebane Foundation STEM grant provides a master teacher to be placed in the school- time period was not provided; inadequate details to support this project has led to significant reforms in low performing schools; • Provided an appropriate description of how student data would be available to students educators and parent. Evidence: schools websites that link to the state's education website; student data is sent home ; district also provides a full non instructional day where teacher conferencing provides student data to students. 		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant provided some evidence of the plan's level of transparency processes, practices, and investments. • Provided verbiage on the district website is the district's budget which includes the amount the state funding per pupil, 		

<p>the federal and county funding; the website contains links that provides salary schedules for every position in the district as well as a uniform chart of accounts to include categories such as fund: state federal local; purpose: instructional, noninstructional; program report code: maintenance exceptional education, etc; A brief description of the extent to which these accounts are functionable would add supporting details/justify the claim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear evidence included state and local funds by participating schools (local, state, and federal funding total per pupil \$8847); each of the participating school's state, local, and federal funds; actual personnel salaries at the school level for participating schools; actual personnel salaries at the school level for participating schools-teachers only; and non personnel expenditures at the school level for participating schools (found in the appendix). 		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	6
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high quality plan for implementation chart demonstrates goals, activities in each goal, a timeline, deliverables, and the responsible parties which adds to the claim that they have the capacity to be successful (Appendix) • The timeline on the high quality plan for implementation were vague; a more complete picture as to when each goal and/or activity will be implemented would have been helpful. • Provided details about the 21st Century education plan (focused on teaching all students in a personalized educational environment using personal computing devices) as a claim of successful conditions- noted the district has wireless Internet access in all schools • District uses summative assessments that are MSL- measures of student learning; (this allows the district to evaluate student growth on on core subjects) • MCS have various partnerships and concurrent projects-Sandhills Community College allows students to complete professional training and earn professional certifications while in HS. More details are needed to support this claim. 		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided a clear and sound description as to how students, families and teachers/principals were engaged in the initial phases of the proposal development. The process began with an initial meeting with the administrative team at the school; followed by a discussion of the current initiatives. Teacher leaders were identified and the idea was presented at a faculty meeting and PTA meeting. Students were informed by the administrators at school wide meetings in each participating school. Feedback was provided at the faculty meetings, parents meetings, and student assemblies. • Although the applicant noted several meetings with stakeholders, there was no mention of any feedback or recommendations from any party . • Noted that 95% of the faculty members signed the letter of support- no evidence of this included • The following statement is unclear-"the percentage discrepancy is due to the absence or availability of some teachers at the meeting." • The applicant provided evidence of supporters (includes letters from MC Board of Educator-President; Communities in Schools; United Way, Southern Pines Public Library; Sandhills Community College's Provost; the Vice Chairman of Moore County Board of Commissioners; the Moore County Literacy Council). 		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant provides clear details to support the plan's efforts in implementing personalized learning environments • The logic behind the proposal is complete and appropriate giving the needs and gaps provided. • An analysis of needs and gaps revealed the following needs in Moore City Schools: lack of funds to support the technology plan. Many of the students and families have limited access to the Internet. "Access to digital learning resources provides unlimited opportunities to each and support struggling students." • Another need identified was the access to specific and timely (technology related) professional development. "The professional development that will be provided will equip teachers with the tools to enable students to pursue learning aligned to college and career ready standards." Applicant did not mention other possible professional development ideas/themes. • The evidence provided focused a lot on technology; would like to see an array or additional areas of emphasis. 		

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	8
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided an approach to learning that will engage and empower the learners; provided the high quality plan (chart) to support claims. • One approach to implementing instructional strategies for all students would be the development of a personalized sequence of instruction for each student. Students would get a rigorous course of study based on students academic needs and interests. How does the applicant define rigor? • Additional strategies include: the use of instructional technology and personal computing devices, literacy intervention strategies, development of 21st Century skills; and use of electronic portfolios to support its ability to provide a rigorous course of study and accelerate learning. "Electronic portfolios will be developed and maintained by each student in order to inform personalized learning paths." • No mention of Math even though the scores are problematic. • "Have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning"... description provide was limited. More specifics as to how the online video chat programs would engage and empower learners would have been helpful. • Strategies mentioned were justifiable and convincing (such as using the flipped classroom model; using the EVAAS and other assessment data for instructional and program decision making). • There was no evidence o how to involve parents. • Evidence that detailed accommodations or differentiated strategies for IEP and or LEP students was missing. 		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	11
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted PD in the areas of data analysis, instructional design using technology, and the use of common formative assessments. • The high quality plan for implementation chart in appendix provided supporting evidence as to what activities, goals, and deliverables would be used in the improvement of instruction and preparation of college ready students. • Evidence of teacher training included the use of professional learning communities PLC which will meet weekly to share and analyze student common formative assessment data, etc. • Actionable resources noted -new student assessments, Measures of student learning; EVAAS: (limited and vague description) • Sound Evidence: the NC Educators Evaluation Systems and EVAAS- used to improve individual and collective educator effectiveness; student, staff and parent surveys. • SLA is one effort used to increase the number of students receiving instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals- Limited description of this programs track record. 		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the organizing of the LEA central office was vague- mentioned kitchen table talks as a means for teachers, parents to have an outlet; who does what in the central office to provide support to schools- • The details that address part B were vague and insufficient. Claims were not supported or convincing. The applicant only noted that creating a positive attitude, encouraging teamwork, and embracing high expectations as principles that guide the efforts of district personnel to provide education for students. • Provides clear and sound evidence of how students earn credit based on demonstrated mastery and the opportunity to master standards multiple times. The applicant notes "...we will begin to develop strategies to implement the use of the flipped classroom model for participating students as s result of Moore County Schools' value for mastery over seat 		

time. The use of this model will include student access to online educational resources at home and more direct engagement with teachers in the classroom that includes activating the knowledge and applying it." Additional evidence include the mobile preschool reading lab; and an online assessment program that will provide students with the opportunity to earn credit based on mastery.

- As it relates to *Providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners*, the applicant mentioned ELLs and provided supporting details ("teachers participate in the Sandhills English Speaking Union of the United States by using summer study grants") but did not elaborate on how resource and practices are adaptable and fully accessible to students with disabilities.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)

10

5

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- To ensure all students, parents, educators have access to content, tools and other learning resources, evidence included the infusion of technology-personal computing devices will be allowed to go home; secured a local partner that will provide internet access at a reduced rate; online resources to include online learning communities and an online site (innovative and appropriate).
- Evidence: District has a content area instructional specialist who will be available for technical support; district has in place a technology PD-webinars and online learning environments; the data warehouse will provide technical support for parents and students- this will be a subset of the Instructional improvement system currently funded by the states RTT grant award (sound, appropriate, and relevant).
- Unclear/vague as to how the information tech systems will allow parents and students to use data for electronic learning systems (more specifics needed).
- Section D, the applicant noted the use the Instructional Improvement System (IIS), a system that provides portals for parents, students, educators, and school/district administrators to access the data and resources needed to inform decision making related to instruction, assessment, and career and college goals. The online grading and attendance system was also cited as the schools use of interoperable data systems.
- The applicant mentioned the use of electronic tutors, and online formative assessments but did not provide any supporting details to strengthen the claim.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As it relates the overall continuous improvement process, evaluation efforts will be led by Carolina Institute for Public Policy who is the current evaluator for the states RTT Award. • The applicant noted the use of both formative and summative evaluation methods. "The formative evaluation will assess the extent to which the intervention is being implemented as intended and will provide program leadership with feedback needed to make ongoing adjustments to the program. The summative evaluation will identify the degree to which students attained academic growth and success." No supporting evidence to support the claims. • The Continuous Improvement Model was mentioned as the guide for the evaluation. The Model schematic (1 define needs and goals; 2 generate designated action plans; 3 implement and monitor; 4 evaluate accomplishments) demonstrates a clear approach to continuously improve the plan but how each step applies to the project would have demonstrated the applicants understanding of the process. • The applicant noted that the model will be processed quarterly- quarterly results will help to shape the direction of the next quarter • Questions that will guide the summative evaluation plan were provided- (questions were appropriate and, achievable). Questions included: "to what degree did the program increase students achievement, graduation rates, and college enrollment; to what degree did the program increase parental engagement in student learning; ...to what degree does this project support the development of a replicable technology/curricular product that is suitable for dissemination?" • Missing evidence: a timeline and measurement tools would have provided more support. 		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- Lacking clear and convincing evidence of ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders.
- Applicant mentioned only that the lessons created and developed as well as the evaluation would be disseminated to the constituents, to the regional level, and to NC Department of Public Instruction. Also noted all deliverable would be made online.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)

5

3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- The rationale for each performance measure was sound and convincing (ex. ...because teacher effectiveness is linked to student achievement; ...the data generated will inform teachers of needed interventions and strategies for success for each student,...)
- Unclear as to how the measures will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading info tailored to the proposed plan and theory of action; supporting details per measure are vague (Tripod project)
- Performance measures are identified and supported by raw data that includes the performance measure, the subgroups, baseline and target data)
- Did not recognize or see how it will review and improve the measure over time

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant provided clear evaluation goals/purposes of the evaluation statements (determine the overall impact of the grant implementation on student outcomes, parental engagement, and teacher practices; and offer cost effectiveness estimates to help determine sustainability of the initiative beyond the grant period).
- Table Y provided the evaluation questions with corresponding means of collection (documents/course review; education or evaluation tool results; observations; interviews; surveys; quant analysis; admin data review; and financial data).
- Evaluation activities description were vague; more specific details are needed to support the plans to evaluate the effectiveness of activities such as PD; technology led activities; use time, staff, money.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall budget includes 11 projects (ex. mobile reading labs; personal computing devices, PD, project based learning). • Identified all funds that will support the project in the table but not in the narrative (ex. US Army program; local funds). • The personnel cost descriptions and cost assumptions are reasonable and justified. • Tables are clear and provide evidence to support justification but limited justification for the use of both laptops and tablets for primary age kids. • Did not see where funds that will be used for one time investments were identified -Descriptions are inadequate. • Unclear how the partnerships (Sandhills Community College; Mebane Foundation STEM grant; I3 Investing in Innovation grant) would specifically contribute-serve as supplemental support. 		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporters of the proposal include Moore County Board of Education President; Communities in Schools Board Chair; Southern Pines Library; Sandhills Community College; County of Moore Board of Commissioners; the United Way; Moore County Literacy Council; Mayor of the town of Robbins; and Moore County Chamber President. • Sustainability of the project will come from state and local funding (mobile reading lab; staff positions; instructional 		

coaches; IT personnel).

- Plans do not show a clear and convincing illustration as to how the project goals will be sustained after the grant.
- Noted that the district is committed to sustaining the projects with the proposal but none of the letters of the supports speaks to this claim.
- Letters of support support the current project and it projects but did not mention of any financial support after grant is over.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not provided 		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application meets absolute priority number 1. • Evidence is provided to support the major priorities of the project in addition to the major initiatives, and outcomes (short, medium, and long term)- shown in the logic model chart in the appendix. • Examples of priorities are appropriate and attainable. For example: bring literacy support to low income neighborhoods- outcomes include increase family engagement; student reading proficiency will increase; and participating student will experience academic success and proficiency; Example: Increase reading proficiency and teacher effectiveness- outcomes include teachers participating in high quality PD; students will become proficient in the application of technology. • Goals are clearly outlined and supported by a realistic timeline and deliverables. Goals mentioned include increase student performance; increase graduation rates; increase college enrollment; increase reading proficiency; increase in 21st century skills. Some of the activities that will satisfy these goals include professional development for teachers in data analysis and instructional design; personalized education plans thru PBL and MIH; frequent feedback on formative assessments; students assigned personal advisors to plan academic and career goals; instruction infused with technology. 		

Total	210	106
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	0
Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant did not include an optional budget. The system would not allow me to submit for review without adding a score. 		



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0439NC-2 for Moore County School

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There is scant evidence that the school district is making strides in recent years in accelerating student academic achievement (e.g., gains in ELA and math scores at most grade levels of most students in elementary and middle schools shows little change in the baseline years). There are also significant decreases for certain subgroups (e.g., LEP and SLD students in 7th grade reading; this trend is seen in a number of grade levels with the same populations and, in some cases, other subgroups). The vision as set out in the first section demonstrates that the district has a plan for building students' basic skills prior to and in the elementary years, use technological resources (individual computing devices for home and school) and project based learning activities in the middle and high schools that prepare students for 21st Century skills and learning opportunities. The applicant claims that their intention is to facilitate learners' becoming designers, authors and publishers of their own work. One way of personalizing the environment for these activities is to provide a career coach who will work with students as they develop individual plans. These strategies have the potential to deepen student learning and build on personal interest and/or need, though, in the case of the former, this is not explicitly addressed within the narrative, and in the case of the latter, it is not clear to what extent these career coaches (current math or reading teachers) will be prepared to build on student academic interests, especially when those might exist outside of the expertise of the coach. There is uneven evidence of the vision addressing the four core assurances. For example, the applicant provides some narrative on the alignment of CCSS-related activities within the proposed database of assessments to be used for instructional decision-making. On the other hand, there is little narrative around a vision for increasing accessing to effective and highly effective teachers and principals, nor are specific vision actions stated relative to the needs of equitably addressing the needs of differentially performing subgroups, especially LEP and student with disabilities.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant clearly describes the process for selecting participating schools with a focus on Tiers IV (lowest performing) and III (Strategic intervention, not having made state or federal benchmarks for 2 years), with two Tier II schools (targeted assistance, not meeting benchmarks for one year). The rationale for the choice of these schools is defensible and the data provided indicates that the participating students meet the eligibility requirements. Chart A(2) identified the schools with the numbers of participating students for each of the eligibility categories. The inclusion of partners outside of the grade bands (mobile literacy lab) has the potential to impact the grade bands down the road as early literacy skills are solidified among households. This is a high score</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	2
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has aspects of high-quality planning that shows how the reform plan will be implemented. The logic model identifies specific priorities (e.g., close the achievement gap for low income, minority, and LEP students), identifies the resources to be used/purchased, the activities/major initiatives, as well as short, medium and long-term outcomes. When paired with the ensuing <i>High Quality Plan for Implementation</i>, many of the aspects of high quality planning appear to be in place. That said, when investigated more closely, the outcomes in the logic model are often vague (Short term: students will become proficient in the application of technology in learning; Long term: Student reading proficiency will increase). In addition, the timelines and responsible parties for the implementation plan lack specificity; they typically follow a pattern of a one to three year timeline (e.g., under increasing student performance the timeline will be 2012-Jan 2014) and the responsible parties (e.g., for most of the goals teachers, school administrators, parents, students, and community leaders are all listed) are so numerous that no individual or group will be accountable. The applicant makes reference to their intention to scale up the</p>		

model across the district but provides no specifics on a plan to do so. This is a low score response

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	1
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district's recent performance on state assessments provides little evidence that they are capable at this time of improving student performance and increasing equity among students. Overall performance on state assessments in many areas (e.g., 6th and 7th grade reading and math, 8th grade reading) have decreased in the two years for which baseline data were provided. Some of the performance of specific targeted subgroups was even more dismal (e.g., LEP students in 7th grade reading going from 75.4% to 15% passage in a year; students with disabilities going from 34.6% to 28.8% on the same test). LEP and students with disabilities consistently scored low on most tests throughout the district. Some of these concerns also translate into graduation rates for these students, that are far below the overall numbers and the gap has increased in the past two years. No data were provided to identify the most recent trends in closing achievement gaps.

Given this lack of achievement for several subgroups, it was equally disconcerting to see some of the goals for improving student performance for the students most at risk. While these goals are potentially achievable, they also clearly lacked ambition and did not indicate a consideration for equity. For example, graduation goals for LEP students in the 2012-13 school year is to return to the 2010-11 mark of 40.9%. Minor increases of .4%/year are proposed for the next two years followed by increases of .7% and .8%. These are insufficient to be considered ambitious for the group that is most disadvantaged in this district. Similarly meager increases are proposed for students with disabilities. These factors are evidence of a low score.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	3

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has an uneven record of increasing performance in a variety of content areas and in graduation rates. The composite scores on reading and math, as well as for graduation rates, for the past four years shows a pattern of peaks and valleys, with increases one year followed by a decrease in the next (see composite reading and math in grades 3-8 in 2009-10 at 79.9%, then 71.2, then 80.8, and the graduation rates of 71.6, 80.2, 72.3, and 85.1). They should be commended for increasing the number of AP exams taken across the district; the narrative, however, does not address the extent to which this increase is taking place within the participating schools. Their attention to high-performing and college-bound students is also noted in their students' SAT performance which has consistently outperformed both national and state mean performance. While the claim is that SAT performance is indicative of the district's success in increasing equity in teaching and learning, the data are not disaggregated in such a way to provide evidence of the overall performances being of similar trajectory for subgroups or in the low-performing schools.

In its lowest performing schools, there is scant evidence that the school district is making strides in recent years in accelerating student academic achievement (e.g., gains in ELA and math scores at most grade levels of most students in elementary and middle schools shows little change in the baseline years). There are also significant decreases for certain subgroups (e.g., LEP and SLD students in 7th grade reading; this trend is seen in a number of grade levels with the same populations and, in some cases, other subgroups). As stated previously, in the participating schools, the district's recent performance on state assessments provides little evidence that they are capable at this time of improving student performance and increasing equity among students. Overall performance on state assessments in many areas (e.g., 6th and 7th grade reading and math, 8th grade reading) have decreased in the two years for which baseline data were provided. Some of the performance of specific targeted subgroups was even more dismal (e.g., LEP students in 7th grade reading going from 75.4% to 15% passage in a year; students with disabilities going from 34.6% to 28.8% on the same test). LEP and students with disabilities consistently scored low on most tests throughout the district. Some of these concerns also translate into graduation rates for these students, that are far below the overall numbers and the gap has increased in the past two years. No data were provided to identify the most recent trends in closing achievement gaps.

The applicant stated that parents are able to access information and student data via the school's website that links to the state's performance website; student information is also sent home with explanations of the implications of the scores. No mention was made in this section of the availability of data educators to inform instructional planning. In sum, this is a low score response

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant demonstrates transparency in its processes and practices by making available the approved budget on its website. They also make a link available on their website that includes salary schedules for every position in the district and disaggregates information by fund type, purpose (instructional, non-instructional), program report code, object code (which can identify level of salaries for teachers and other staff), site and the assignment authorization (supervision of the position). Chart in the appendix provides this information in aggregate for the district and disaggregated by school. This is a high score.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant states that the initiative proposed will be local and that it does not conflict with any state initiatives or authority. They provide a letter of support from the state's director of RttT that indicates he has read their proposal during the comment period. No objections were raised in this letter and the director wished them well in their application. The district provides evidence in this section that they have a number of partners who will support their efforts to personalize learning environments. These include a partnership with a local internet provider. Since personal computing devices are a significant resource for their plan, this partnership, which will provide low-cost internet services for low-income families, appears to be an essential partner in delivering their proposed activities. They also have a current partnership with a local community college for students to have access to career pathways and college coursework while still in high school. This relationship will provide students with opportunities to earn college credit and professional certifications or an associate's degree, thus accelerating learning and preparation for college and career for those students who take advantage of the opportunity. A partnership with the US Army also provides students with after-school tutoring and mentoring; this partnership also provides opportunities for credit recovery. This qualifies as a high score response</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes a multi-stage process for engaging stakeholders in the process of the grant. These included: initial meetings with administrative teams at each school; identification of teacher leaders to assist with drafting proposal; presentations at faculty and PTA meetings at each participant school; meetings in each of the schools to inform students and seek feedback. The applicant states that feedback from these meetings was incorporated into the proposal but provides no specifics of issues that are aligned with particular groups. Teachers were provided a form letter to sign and the narrative states that this was signed by approximately 95% of teachers at each school; a copy of the form letter is in the appendix but no corroborating data were provided to indicate support by school. Several letters of support were provided from local institutions (e.g., Southern Pines Library), businesses, and community leaders. The lack of some of the specifics of engagement, especially in relation to those constituencies, like parents and students, most impacted, qualifies this as a high-mid range score</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>As stated previously, the applicant's plan has elements of high-quality planning but lacks some of the specifics necessary to have a high-quality plan that is likely to be successful. They do provide an analysis of some of the strengths (e.g., currently using professional learning communities, having wireless access in all buildings) that they can leverage in creating conditions for reform along with the gaps (e.g., digital divide for low-income students, PD for teachers to transform teaching) that will be filled by the grant funds. Supporting evidence does not always align with the applicant's narrative. For example, the narrative states that district scores have "consistently" improved over the past four years. While there has been significant increase in scores from 69.3% to 80.5%, the narrative does not address the nearly 9 percentage point drop in 2010-11 that belies the "consistent" improvement. The lack of high-quality planning makes this a low score.</p>		

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score

(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	4
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identifies 21st century skills, including soft skills like goal-setting, teamwork, etc., as a focus for the personalized learning environment. Students will have a personalized learning plan and access to information from a data warehouse to enable them to view real-time data along with personalized intervention strategies to help them reach their goals. The plan rests on a tripod of initiatives that includes personal computing devices for all students and literacy intervention strategies from PreK through high school that has the potential to help students develop a personalized sequence of instruction and reach their learning targets. They also propose to use project-based learning as both an instructional alternative to maximize students' recognition of the importance of what they are learning and act as a motivational context for instruction; they cite several studies that highlight the benefits of this type of instruction for student engagement. Throughout the narrative, the applicant states that they will enact these plans with the support of both educators and parents but provide no details about parental involvement in the process. In addition, in their espousing of the importance of literacy in preparing students for meeting college and career ready standards, there is no mention of the any attention to mathematics in this preparation; although district-wide performance in math is generally strong, many of the subgroups identified for specific interventions are performing at less than acceptable levels.</p> <p>As stated in previous sections, the applicants' lack of specifics, like the one just mentioned, and the lack of the elements of a high quality plan (e.g., lack of accountability on individual activities to address specific goals, lack of measurable outcomes) limit the confidence that one can have in the successful implementation of the grant. For example, the narrative in this section makes no mention of accommodations nor any differentiated strategies for high-need students, especially those, like LEP and special education students, who have been identified as achieving at levels lower than other subgroups. The lack of specifics and minimal elements of high-quality planning relegates this section to a low score.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	6
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant states that teachers will be provided with extensive PD in data analysis, instructional design using technology, and the use of common formative assessments. PD will include a combination of training and participation in professional learning communities (PLC) designed to assist teachers with changing the curricular foci from covering content in standard ways to empowering students to use project-based learning opportunities to meet their personal goals and exploring content in meaningful ways. The PLCs will meet weekly and will provide teachers with opportunities to analyze student work and problem solve the choices of instructional strategies to assist learning. These meetings will make use of formative assessments and track student progress.. The PLCs will also be used to engage in book studies to assist teachers in identifying effective strategies.</p> <p>The district is buildign a data warehouse that will provide the tools and resources for students and teachers to access information that may prove helpful in accelerating learning. All teachers will be expected to keep an active and frequently updated website that provides links to resources for students to support their learning goals in meeting college and career-ready standards.</p> <p>The district also makes use of the state's Educator Evaluation System (NCEES), that helps school leaders assess and work with individual teachers, and the state's Education Value Added Assessment System, that helps teachers track student performance in relation to state assessments in both outcome and growth. The district participates in the Sand Hills Leadership Academy and touts this as a resource to increase effective and highly effective teachers. NCEES access is promoted as the tool that will allow them to identify teachers whose students are not meeting growth targets. The applicant states that this will allow them to target these teachers for creating improvement plans and they imply that this will help increase the number of effecive and highly effective teachers; no mention is made about replacing teachers or other plans for increasing these teachers in hard-to-staff schools or subject. There is no mention of tools used to increase the number of effective or highly effective principals.</p> <p>As stated in previous sections, the applicants' lack of specifics and the lack of the elements of a high quality plan (e.g., lack of accountability on individual activities to address specific goals, lack of measurable outcomes) limit the confidence that one can have in the successful implementation of the grant. For example, the charts that are referenced provide few details of how PD will be engaged. The lack of specifics and minimal elements of high-quality planning relegates this section to a low mid range score.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
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(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	5
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The elements of the practices, policies and rules that the applicant has in place provide spaces for the facilitation of personalized learning. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A central office that has ongoing feedback loops (e.g., monthly Kitchen Table Talks) that can facilitate the sharing of information and the heading off of issues and concerns. The central office also has a long-term commitment through the IT department to creating the infrastructure to facilitate the personalized learning environment proposed • Individual schools have leadership teams that the applicant claims have autonomy and flexibility on scheduling, personnel decisions, etc. • Plans are already underway to use the "flipped" model of instruction to increase student mastery of learning over seat time and take full advantage of the technology being infused into the planning. Also, students will be able to access formative assessments tied to CCSS outcomes and demonstrate mastery then move on to the next goals in their personalized learning plans and at their own paces • The use of personal computers is touted as a way of making instruction accessible to students with disabilities and ELL skills; no specific details on how this will work are provided. <p>These aspects provide evidence of an infrastructure that may be useful for implementing the grant. Again, however, the lack of a high-quality plan that provides specifics (e.g., how will the personal computers help ELL and students with disabilities access instruction that is appropriate) qualifies this section for a low mid-range score.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	3
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The elements of the school infrastructure that the applicant has in place provide spaces for the facilitation of personalized learning. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The partnership with the outside vendor to provide low-cost access to internet services and the access to personal computers for all students regardless of income are essential aspects to the fulfillment of the promise of the grant. Additionally, the district's commitment to provide access to school computers and the initiative to improve the technology landscape will increase the access that educators, children and parents will need to successfully implement the proposed activities. • Educators will have access to PD and other training opportunities to incorporate the use of technology tools in their teaching. Parents and students will have home and school access to personal computing devices; no mention is made of training for parents in the use of the computers • The district will offer an online site to connect with educators, students and families to exchange information. They will also make use of the state's Instructional Improvement System that provides a portal for stakeholders to access information and data. While the applicant claims that the system allows for students to upload exemplars of performance, it is not clear from the narrative whether this system also connects to individual teacher gradebooks for monitoring classroom performance in real time. • The applicant claims its data system is interoperable <p>These aspects provide evidence of an infrastructure that may be useful for implementing the grant. Again, however, the lack of a high-quality plan that provides specifics (e.g., training for parents) qualifies this section for a low score.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes a Continuous Improvement Management model that will be incorporated to monitor outcomes. This will consist of semi-monthly meetings that will focus on facilitators and barriers to implementation, the meeting of outcomes and the allocation of resources. This will be guided by the non-specific "project staff." The grant will also benefit from the employment of the Carolina Institute for Public Policy (CIPP). CIPP is currently serving as the external evaluator for the state's RtTt implementation, so this reviewer infers that they will have developed expertise to provide significant feedback in both formative and summative reports. There are no details of the timing of specific evaluation activities or the frequency of reports.</p>		

The basic structure is in place for a rigorous continuous improvement process; the lack of details and measurable outcomes again prevent this from being considered a high-quality plan. This is a low score

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)

5

2

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a clear plan for engaging in ongoing communication with stakeholders. Instruments will be designed through a collaborative process and will involve focus groups and interviews. Once evaluation instruments are designed, communication plans include regular meetings with internal stakeholders and public sharing of evaluation activities and lessons learned to local community members, regional constituents and the State. Nationally, results will be disseminated through conferences and conventions. The deliverables will be posted online, which is proposed as a method of sustaining momentum beyond the grant period. The plan itself is multi-factored but lacks the specifics to make it high quality, therefore it is a low mid-range score

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)

5

1

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a clear rationale for the choice of each of the specific performance measures (e.g., the choice of number of students who interact with effective or highly effective teachers and principals was chosen because of the research-based link of teacher effectiveness and student achievement). In some cases, they provide a clear explanation of how the measure will provide timely information that is connected to the success of their proposal. For example, the use of grade 4-8 reading EOG assessments is noted as a corroboration of lexile scores (another performance measure). The correlation of two different instruments demonstrates a more rigorous standard for success than the use of a single instrument. That said, it is unclear (and questionable) that the 60% standard for the EOG assessment identified as the target can be considered rigorous. In much the same way, some of the high school measures, like the filling out of the FAFSA, are necessary but not necessarily rigorous measure for determining college readiness as the applicant states. No mention is made as to methods that the grantee will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient. In the accompanying chart, there are measurable performance targets but the other aspects of the narrative make it still unclear the specifics of who will be responsible for different aspects of the plan. This is a low score.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant will engage an external evaluator to determine overall impact of the grant on student outcomes, parental engagement and teacher practices, as well as offer cost effectiveness estimates to determine the sustainability of the grant activities after the funding period ends. Activities will include interviews, observations and surveys of all the major stakeholders. The evaluation will focus on questions that look at the effectiveness of the program on student achievement, on parental engagement, on PD to impact instruction, and the replicability of the tech and curricular products. No specific timeline for the different activities was provided and general comments like "offer cost effectiveness estimates" do not necessarily provide the details necessary to determine whether the evaluation will be sufficiently in depth to address issues of compensation reform or the use of staff time and the allocation of resources. This is a low score because it does not meet the definition of a high-quality plan.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The budget identifies local and grant funds necessary to implement the proposed outcomes; it is both detailed and comprehensive. The lion's share of expense is in years one and two to purchase technology resources (personal computing devices for students), provide training in the interventions, and to make one-time purchases, like the bus for the mobile preschool. These are appropriate expenditures that are necessary to implement the wide-ranging solutions proposed. The applicant provides for the use of funds from the technology initiative to minimize some of the technology costs and maximize grant funds to purchase those items necessary to connect all students to the solutions. Several positions are identified as important to implementation of the grant, including the teacher, teacher assistant and bus driver for the mobile lab. It appears that these positions will be fully funded by the grant. While the district claims it intends to not only continue but to expand the use of the mobile lab, it is not apparent that this will be accomplished</p>		

without more of a commitment on the part of the district to use local funds to begin to supplant grant funds in later years of the grant so that the impact on local funding is not as large and has been integrated into the operational budget over time.

Overall, the general appropriateness of the budget is in line with the intent but is hampered by the lack of planning for the mobile lab and is a mid-range score.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)

10

3

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states their commitment to sustaining the activities within their mission of Growing to Greatness and technology initiatives. In the case of the latter, the district states that they have a strong partner in the local county commissioners who have already provided \$25M to fund the first portion of the technology initiative and have pledged greater support in the future; the letter of support does not mention their fiscal support but does show them as supportive of the initiative. The applicant identifies future use of Title II funds as a potential source of funding for PD. Otherwise, the applicant states that most aspects of the initiative will be funded through local funds. Given that there are new positions, it is not clear how these additional local funds will be secured. The lack of specificity on this makes the sustainability based upon local funding questionable. They do mention that the mobile lab would be paid for out of local funds through community support but do not provide any specific foundations or plans to secure these funds. The intentions in this narrative appear to be forthright; the lack of specificity and/or corroborating documentation makes the sustainability of activities beyond the grant period speculative at best. Therefore this is a low mid-range score.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: This reviewer found no evidence that this was addressed.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: The applicant did not comprehensively and coherently address how it will build upon the core educational assurances. Their plan has aspects that could be used to increase access to personalized learning environments for students. However, their overall plan fell short of meeting the criteria of being high quality and many of the performance measures fell short of being ambitious while generally being achievable. The plan too often addressed students as a general body and did not differentiate the needs of specific subgroups, like ELL and students with disabilities, that needed to increase their learning in greater trajectories than others who were closer to meeting standards.		

Total	210	74
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form



Application #0439NC-3 for Moore County School

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has set forth a reform vision with a clear focus on utilizing emerging technology to transform the educational environment and improve student achievement. However, the proposed vision and corresponding approach do not make direct links to the four core assurance areas.</p> <p>Specifically, Core Assurance (2) building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction is not addressed at all. The applicant identifies individual measures and a desire to have student's engage with digital portfolios does not constitute a compelling vision or a clear and credible approach. There is one sentence that references using <i>continuous measurement through frequent formative assessments</i>. Neither this statement, nor the references to measurements constitutes a comprehensive vision or a clear and credible approach to building upon this particular assurance.</p> <p>Likewise, Core Assurance (3) recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most was addressed with a statement of commitment - not a comprehensive and coherent vision or a clear and credible plan to build upon this assurance.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identified the participating schools and articulated the tiered system the LEA utilizes to assign levels of support to schools and used to select schools to participate in this project. Each of the participating schools has been identified as tier 2, 3, or 4 requiring some levels of in addition assistance. Furthermore, the applicant provided evidence that each of the participating schools meets the eligibility requirements.</p> <p>The applicant identified the schools that will participate and the necessary student and educator demographic information required in this section.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not provide sufficient evidence that a high quality plan for scaling the work beyond the ten schools exists. The logic model included provides a sense of what the goals are and what the associated measures of success would be. One could argue this is a framework for the work that would be completed and ultimately applied to other schools. That said, the logic model in and of itself does not represent a high quality plan for scaling the project.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's vision, with a strong emphasis on digital learning and the use of technology as a core element of instruction, provides components of a comprehensive vision yet lacks coherence as it relates to many of the identified measures. For example, math measures are listed and significant achievement gaps exist between subgroups – yet the articulated vision does not speak to direct efforts to improve mathematics achievement.</p> <p>The goals that have been set for reading are both achievable and ambitious. However, the lack of targeted mathematics support within the grant causes one to question whether the growth in mathematics is truly achievable.</p> <p>The applicant has indicated it will address the achievement gaps that exist with the most significant gaps existing between</p>		

cultural subgroups, students with disabilities, and students in the ESL programs. The goals to eliminate the gaps our ambitious – though the primary strategy articulated in the reform vision is the personalization of the educational process via technology. The lack of articulated structural and strategic support for these subgroups, above and beyond the use of new technology, is concerning.

The graduate rates appear to be achievable. The post-grant rates between subgroups would suggest that the rates may not be ambitious. Specifically, the graduation gap between students with disabilities and white students was 27% in 2011-12 and the gap is projected to be 27.9% in 2016-17. Likewise, the gap between cultural subgroups is projected to remain the same. This would suggest the applicant's vision and corresponding plan has not been designed to have a differential effect on the most impacted subgroups.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The increase in graduation rates and the decrease in drop out rates over the past four years are outstanding and reflect a track record of success specific to high school completion. The SAT improvement rates are challenging to assess without knowing what percentage of students participated in each year. Further, the growth in the 10th grade reading Composite Performance scores are impressive.</p> <p>The applicant's statement that <i>student achievement has been continuously improved over the past four years in the area of grades three through eight</i> is not supported by the Composite Performance data provided. The data does not show a clear pattern of continuous improvement in that the 2010-11 scores reflect a significant drop from the previous three years. That particular year may be an anomaly, yet cannot not be ignored when making a statement about continuous improvement.</p> <p>Outside of the Composite Performance measures, the lack of data by subgroup did not allow for an analysis of the impact of the LEAs efforts with respect to equity. Inclusion of disaggregate data in this section would have been helpful.</p> <p>The applicant identifies several initiatives intended to support it's lowest performing schools yet provides no evidence that these efforts have had the intended effect – providing evidence that ambitious and significant reforms have been achieved.</p> <p>The paragraph specific to criteria (c) does not provide compelling evidence that the LEA provides information that informs and improves participation, instruction, and services in any specific way.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identified the data currently available and expressed the ability to produce and make available all of the data required by this criteria. It is not clear as to the current practices of the applicant with regards to making the school level information available. The statement, <i>the district has the ability</i>, would suggest the district is not currently providing the level of information provided on page 10 of the appendix</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant did not provide evidence to support the claim specific to conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements exists. The description of programs and efforts within this section may reflect district/school level autonomy, yet there are nor references to legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements. The score provided in this section is based on an assumed level of support from the State. Including specific State-level legal, statutory and regulatory requirements would have been made this particular response stronger.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	9
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant process for engagement of faculty was impressive and exceeds the criteria established as reflected in the 95%</p>		

support rate. Furthermore, the applicant identified that the feedback from the engagement process was incorporated and helped shaped the final proposal.

The applicant also provided evidence of support from key community based groups as reflected in the letters of support.

The outreach to parents was limited to PTA meetings and while it appears there was some level of student input (assembly), it is not clear how, where or what level that took place.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

2

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not provide evidence of a high-quality plan for an analysis of needs and gaps as it pertains to this proposal. The only gap and subsequent need presented in this section was the *digital divide*. This would suggest that other needs and gaps do not exist, though the applicant has identified significant gaps in achievement between various subgroups.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	11
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided a description of a plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the environment utilizing a number of strategies. The plan is comprehensive in that it addresses the specific criteria set out in this section (see further comments specific to each criteria). The coherence of the plan is difficult to gauge based on the description as the applicant has not clearly identified how the component parts fit together or how the applicant views the potential need or impact for any one strategy over another.</p> <p>(a) (i) The applicant identifies the intent to develop individualized learning goals for K-8 students based on the use of frequent, formative assessment in literacy and math. Furthermore, the applicant identifies the use of electronic portfolios linked to personalized learning pathways as a key tool for helping students understand what they are learning as a key to their success in accomplishing goals.</p> <p>(a) (ii) The applicant identifies the use of personalized learning pathways that are aligned with academic and content standards (common core) as well as the <i>soft skills</i> connected to career and college readiness. As a measure of academic progress, the applicant proposes to utilize real time, online formative assessments to provide frequent feedback to individual students and their teachers specific to the student's progress.</p> <p>(a) (iii) The primary instructional strategy specific to this criteria is the use of Project-Based Learning supported by the use of instructional technology. The applicant identifies PBL as a key strategy and provides a solid foundation in terms of evidence to support PBL, though does not specify the extent to which PBL will be implemented by level. Articulating anticipated use of PBL at the elementary, middle and high school level would have provided information to assist in assessing the coherence of the plan.</p> <p>The applicant also identified linking directly with a community college to create career pathway opportunities at the high school level - driven by student interests.</p> <p>(a) (iv) The applicant identifies the desire to increase the number of International school partnerships and the use of digital technology to connect students to other students around the world. It is assumed that the use of PBL and the access/utilization of technology will also support this particular criteria, though the applicant did not speak to this directly.</p> <p>(a) (v) Throughout this section, the applicant references student development in relation to academic content as well as skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, etc. The use of PBL provides an instructional context to develop both the academic content knowledge as well as the skills and traits listed.</p> <p>(b) (i) The use of technology and the direct access students, parents and teachers will have to an individualized data dashboard will support a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development.</p> <p>(b) (ii) The applicant identifies two high-quality instructional approaches and environments: Project Based Learning and the concept of a flipped classroom. Both yield great potential in support of personalizing instruction to meet the needs and interest of individual students.</p> <p>(b) (iii) The applicant provides a clear intent to provide access to high quality content through the use of digital technologies.</p>		

While the link to college and career readiness is suggested throughout this section and specific tools are referenced (i.e. state level tool linked to the State's RTTT application), a coherent development plan for linking the technology, PBL etc. to academic content that is vertically aligned is missing and causes the coherence of the overall plan to be in question.

(b) (iv) The applicant has clearly identified the need to further develop existing data warehousing tools to support this criteria. Furthermore, the applicant intends to support *career coaches* to support the personalization of plans for high school ages students who are struggling.

(b) (v) The applicant does not address this particular criteria directly. While there are references to research with PBL that would suggest PBL will provide one form of accomodation and there are strategies described that will have an impact on high-need students (career coaches, K-8 Literacy focus, mobile literacy lab at the Pre-K level) - the lack of explicit discussion on supporting high-impact learners causes the overall coherence of the plan to be in question.

(c) The applicant identifies a train the trainer model (primarily train teachers to train students) as the primary mechanism for providing support to students. This is a clear and compelling strategy that makes sense.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)

20

8

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This particular section calls for a high quality plan specific to develop the individual and collective capacity to support teaching and learning in a personalized environment. Throughout this section, the applicant fails to articulate a plan for professional development and training. For example, several paragraphs reference *training* staff on the use of formative assessment yet do not provide specifics to what type of training will be provided or how it will be delivered. In another section, the applicant identifies training specific to Project-Based Learning without providing any specifics (i.e. identify outside consultants, design teams, etc.). The applicant clearly understands the importance of professional development and training. That said, the lack of specific strategies and structures presented does not support the notion that the applicant has a high quality plan.

With regards to the use of professional learning teams, the applicant identifies that teachers will engage in PLCs (referenced in 2 paragraphs) without providing specifics to how this will occur. Examples that would have helped illustrate a quality of plan could include whether the collaboration time would be embedded within the school day, outside the school day, etc.

The applicant references weekly meeting structures designed to provide the opportunity for teachers to work together with regards to using data for decision making and ultimately driving instructional decisions. With that said, the applicant does not identify specifics linked to these team meetings like key teaming processes and practices or how teams will receive technical support and/or professional development.

The use of the evaluation system and the means for supporting teachers who are struggling was clearly articulated. However, no strategies to address hard-to-staff schools, subjects or specialty areas was presented.

Overall, this section provided many broad statements of intent with very few specific details. More details would have strengthen the quality of the plan presented.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	5

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant identified that the IT department is primed to support the technology infusion that would be provided with this grant proposal. However, the applicant did not provide a description of the organizational structure of the central office that would provide evidence that it is structured to support or service all participating schools.

The applicant clearly identifies that schools have existing leadership teams and makes the statement that the schools have sufficient autonomy and flexibility. While this may be true, the applicant provides no specific examples to illustrate the type of

flexibility or autonomy that currently exists.

The applicant identified means for providing students with the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on mastery through both external structures (community college and virtual options) and within the student learning platform. It is not clear whether the applicant has policies specific to earning credit via proficiency.

While the applicant identified a variety of resources and practices that may support students with disabilities and English learners, they did not make explicit connections to these subgroups to include possible adaptations within proposed instructional strategies, etc.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Ensuring access to the necessary tools and learning resources was identified as an essential need and providing technology for students to use at school and at home is a critical strategy.

The technology support articulated in the proposal is very limited - specifically for families and students. This is true in terms of access for families (beyond providing technology devices) in that the applicant intends to provide a reduced rate for internet access at home. While this is a great strategy, it does not ensure that all students will have access - specifically the most impacted students. There are a number of strategies to support access including open lab access in the evenings, partnerships with community agencies (public library, YMCA, etc.).

The existing data system (supported by the State RTT Grant) provides a great foundation for the applicant to build upon. The articulated plan around the use of the system is sound.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant proposes to use an external evaluator to provide support with the continuous improvement process. Considering the size and scope of the project, this seems to be a legitimate component part of a continuous improvement process. The use of both formative and summative measures have been identified and have been linked to key priorities and investments. These are all key components of an effective continuous improvement plan.</p> <p>The applicant proposes the project staff will engage in the Continuous Improvement Management model with the support of an external evaluator. Considering the size/scope of the project, this evaluation model may be insufficient considering the diffused nature of the grant. Specifically, the lack of explicit building-level processes linked to the continuous improvement processes may be problematic.</p> <p>The applicant does identify the intent to share information publicly.</p> <p>The proposed measures are all appropriate. The use of the Tripod Project is an excellent example of a non-cognitive measurer of student growth.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant discusses sharing information in two sentences within this particular section of the application. The applicant did not identify explicit strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders that would yield the potential to support on-going adjustments to support continuous improvement.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant identified measures that are appropriate and provided a rationale for why the measures were chosen.

The baseline data provided for the MClass Assessments are appropriate but not necessarily ambitious. An annual 3% increase results in roughly one quarter of all K-3 students meeting the proficiency level after 4 years of implementation. Likewise, the incremental 2% growth on the Reading EOG's for 4th-8th grade students does not reflect an ambitious goal.

The applicant did not articulate how it might improve the measures over time.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposed evaluation of effectiveness of the investments is designed to be a summative assessment of the program. This particular criteria is specific to how the applicant will engage in evaluation that would support necessary adjustments and revisions during implementation. The proposed summative activities could be used to assess implementation, though the proposed activities are designed to be conducted at the end of the project. This will not support the intent of this criteria.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identified all funds that will support the project.</p> <p>Considering the scope of the project specific to integration of technology and utilization of project based learning, the number of instructional coaches appears to be insufficient. Furthermore, assigning a .5 FTE to each building - regardless of size of school or staff does not seem reasonable.</p> <p>The applicant did identify a thoughtful rational for the investments and priorities that included a description of all funds and identifying the costs that will be one-time investments versus ongoing costs. The applicant did discuss the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environment by identifying the need to utilize other funding streams to maintain the supports and to replenish the equipment.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identified several funding streams that either exist or could be created to support this project and the projects sustainability. The proposal identifies expenditures that will be continued beyond the life of the grant. While the project goals, after the term of the grant, are clear - an actual high-quality plan is not fully articulated or presented. As an example of a component part of a plan could be the reduction of instructional coaches over time as existing staff have been trained and the only coaching needed are for new teachers.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: Competitive Preference was not addressed by the applicant.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: The applicant has articulated the intent to personalize learning environments in an effort to improve learning and teaching. Specifically, the applicant identifies key strategies (project-based learning and flipped classrooms utilizing technology) designed to enhance and personalize learning at the individual student level. Furthermore, the use of an individualized data dashboard available to students, parents, and teachers will support a personalized learning environment. While the applicant has met this particular selection criteria, the quality of the plan (coherence and comprehensive) is assessed in other sections (i.e. Criteria C1 and C2).		

Total	210	112
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